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ABSTRACT

The Dade County (Florida) Public Schools contracted with Strategy Research, Incorporated, to conduct a telephone survey of 400 Dade County registered voters. Focus was on determining the extent of support for a bond issue/tax increase to provide funds for the building and renovation of schools. Survey findings indicated that respondents: (1) perceived a need to build and renovate schools in Dade County; (2) supported a bond issue until they were notified of the associated property tax increase (PTI), at which time support fell from 80% to 67% in favor of a PTI; (3) generally felt satisfied with local public schools; (4) preferred larger classes to help solve school overcrowding if additional funding was not available; (5) judged themselves to be more familiar with public schools than is generally found to be the case nationwide; (6) rated school personnel higher than did respondents participating in national surveys; and (7) viewed the local school systems as improving in the past few years. Priority issues indicated by respondents included student dropouts, a lack of teachers, and a lack of discipline. Twelve data tables are provided, and the 44-item telephone survey is appended. (TJH)

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DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Telephone Survey of Dade County Voters

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Telephone Survey of Dade County Voters

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DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Department of Management Analysis
Office of Educational Accountability
1450 Northeast Second Avenue
Miami, Florida 33132

November, 1987

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Table of Contents

	Page
List of Tables	i
Executive Summary	ii
Introduction	1
Method	1
° Instrument Design ° Sample Selection ° Interviewer Training ° Survey Implementation ° Sample Demographics	
Results and Conclusions	5
° Tax Increases to Support DCPS ° Rating of the Public Schools ° Major Problems Confronting DCPS ° Sources of Information About DCPS	
Appendix - Telephone Survey of Dade County Residents (English Form)	15
References	21

List of Tables

Table		Page
1	Sample Demographics Compared to Dade County Registered Voters	3
2	Voting Districts Represented in the Survey Sample Compared to the Dade County Population	4
3	Degree of Support for Passing a Bond Referendum	5
4	Bond Referendum Support Based on Type of Election	6
5	Support for Alternate Solutions to School Overcrowding and Renovation Needs Given Increased Funding is Not Available	7
6	A Comparison of Bond Referendum Support by Selected Demographic Variables	8
7	Rating of the School District	9
8	Rating the School District: A Comparison of DCPS Findings With the 1987 Gallup Poll	11
9	Degree of Familiarity With the Local Public Schools	12
10	Perceived Improvement in the Local Public Schools	12
11	Problems Confronting DCPS	13
12	Respondent's Source of Information About DCPS	14

Executive Summary

The Dade County Public Schools (DCPS) Office of Educational Accountability contracted with Strategy Research, Inc., an independent firm experienced in conducting telephone surveys, to conduct a survey of 400 Dade County registered voters. The primary purpose of the survey was to determine the extent of community support for a bond issue/tax increase to provide funds for the building of new schools and the renovation of older schools. Respondents were also asked to rate the local public schools and to identify problem areas confronting the system.

Random digit dialing was used to select a sample of persons who indicated they were registered voters and likely to vote in the March 1988 Presidential Primary and/or in a special election concerning funding for the public schools. Although a relatively small number of registered voters were sampled, comparisons of demographic data indicated they were, in general, representative of Dade County voters.

The majority of respondents surveyed perceived that there is a need to build new schools and to renovate older schools in Dade County. The majority would also be willing to support a bond issue/tax increase to fund such improvements. The level of this support is better than what was found in a major national survey conducted by the Gallup Organization. Results also indicated that passage of a bond referendum would be only slightly more likely during a special election rather than during a presidential primary.

Respondents were overwhelmingly supportive of a bond issue (80 percent) until they were given an estimated cost of $60 more a year in property taxes extending for 30 years. Support fell from 80 to 67 percent in favor of an increase in property taxes of this magnitude. This decrease in support was most noticeable among Black respondents and those respondents with limited educational backgrounds.

The respondents surveyed were generally satisfied with the local public schools, however, they tended to rate the public schools nationally higher than DCPS. Rather than a lack of confidence in DCPS schools, this finding may reflect an unusually positive view of schools in other parts of the country.

Survey findings also indicated respondents: 1) preferred larger classes to help solve school overcrowding if additional funding was not available; 2) judged themselves to be more familiar with their local public schools than what is generally found from major national surveys; 3) rated DCPS teachers, principals, and administrators higher than respondents participating in national surveys; and 4) viewed DCPS as improving in the last few years to an extent beyond that generally found from national surveys.

School overcrowding was seen as a major problem confronting the district by approximately three-quarters of the respondents. Results from the survey tended to substantiate the priority status already afforded by the district to several other areas of continuing concern. These areas included dropouts, lack of needed teachers, and lack of discipline.

Introduction

Public opinion is important to school districts which depend on local participation and support. Knowing where the district's constituents stand provides a basis for discussing issues relevant to strategic planning.

Last year a survey research program was initiated by the Office of Educational Accountability to collect information from four important groups. These groups included registered voters residing in Dade County, parents of students attending DCPS schools, DCPS staff, and DCPS students. The purpose of this program was to provide information needed for long-term and short-term planning and to assist in the process of systemwide improvement. The present report provides findings from one of these survey projects.

The Dade County Public Schools contracted with a local research firm (Strategy Research, Inc.) to conduct two telephone surveys of Dade County registered voters. These studies were sponsored by the DCPS Bureau of Professionalization and District Management and the Office of Educational Accountability. The Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce also served as a resource in the development of this project.

The first study surveyed 600 persons who indicated they were registered voters likely to vote in <u>both</u> the upcoming March 1988 Presidential Primary and in a special election concerning funding for the local public schools. To be selected for this study, respondents had to indicate a willingness to vote in <u>both</u> types of elections. Those respondents indicating a willingness to vote in either the presidential primary or in a special election, but not in both, were excluded. The second sample consisted of 400 persons who indicated they were registered voters and who indicated a willingness to vote in <u>either</u> type of election.

Despite the fact that results from both samples were similar, they were considered to be separate and distinct. This was the case since the surveys were conducted at different times and potential voting behavior was defined differently in each. Since findings from the two samples were similar, only the second sample consisting of 400 respondents willing to vote in either type of election will be presented in this report. This sample has been selected for reporting purposes since respondents were allowed to "naturally fall out" from the population of persons self-identified as Dade County registered voters rather than to be "artificially" selected on the basis of their potential voting behavior.

The primary purpose of this telephone survey was to determine the degree of support in the community for a bond issue/tax increase to provide funds for the building of new schools and the renovation of older schools. In addition, respondents were also asked to rate the public schools and to identify problems confronting the school system.

Method

<u>Instrument Design</u>

The instrument used in conducting the telephone survey was constructed by the Office of Educational Accountability with the assistance of resource persons from the University of Miami, Florida International University, Miami-Dade Community College, and Strategy Research, Inc. Several items were taken verbatim from existing surveys utilized by other school districts, as well as

those used by the Gallup Organization in their annual poll concerning the Public's Attitude Toward the Public Schools.

The forty-four item survey (see Appendix) was divided into four major areas. The areas included on the survey required respondents to assign ratings to the district's instructional program and to DCPS teachers and principals, as well as the degree to which the public is informed about the local schools. Respondents were also given a list of potential problem areas and were asked to indicate whether each represented a problem for the local public schools. In addition, questions to determine community support for a proposed bond issue/tax increase and to determine respondents' major sources of information about the public schools were also included in the survey.

Sample Selection

An external contractor was selected to conduct the survey in an effort to maximize third-party objectivity. The sample for the survey was generated by using random digit dialing. This method is designed to obtain responses which are generalizable, within predetermined statistical limits, to the community as a whole. Random digit dialing has several advantages over sampling from the telephone directory. A major advantage of this method is that households with unlisted numbers, inaccurately listed numbers, and new listings can be included in the sample.

The sampling universe was composed of all registered voters from the 21 voting districts established by the Dade County Elections Department. The sample of 400 interviews controlled for the population in each district, ethnicity, and sex of respondents. Only respondents indicating they were registered voters and likely to vote in either the March 1988 Presidential Primary and/or in a special election concerning funding for the public schools were selected for interviewing.

Since the survey was conducted using random digit dialing, it is possible to generalize the results to all registered voters in the districts sampled within the limits imposed by the total sample size (n=400). These limits indicate that one can be 95 percent confident that a given response is within $\pm$ 4.5 percent of the response that would have been obtained had every registered voter in the county (with a telephone) been interviewed rather than only a sample of voters. The degree to which these findings can be generalized is also dependent upon the potential bias involved in self-reported voter registration status and future voting behavior. The findings should be viewed with a degree of caution since it is not possible to confirm either of these respondent characteristics.

Interviewer Training

Each of the fourteen interviewers who administered the survey participated in training before conducting any actual interviews. This training included instruction in interviewing techniques, orientation to the procedures involved with calling and recording survey responses, as well as practice with the survey instrument. All training was conducted by staff employed by Strategy Research, Inc.

Survey Implementation

All telephone surveying was conducted from a central location at the offices of Strategy Research, Inc. To ensure appropriate representation of employed persons, all interviewing was done between the hours of 4-9 p.m., Monday through Friday, and 10 a.m. - 8 p.m. on Saturday. All surveying was conducted from August 28, 1987 to September 24, 1987.

Depending upon the preferred language of the respondent, questions were read and responses were recorded directly onto survey forms in either English or Spanish. Twenty percent of the interviews conducted on a daily basis were validated by a field supervisor employed by Strategy Research, Inc.

Data generated by the telephone survey were analyzed by the DCPS Office of Educational Accountability.

Sample Demographics

The degree of similarity between the sample and the demographics of the population from which it was selected is an additional indicator of the extent to which survey findings can be generalized to the community at large.

Although only a relatively small number of registered voters were sampled (400 out of 593,108), comparisons of demographic data contained in Tables 1 and 2, indicate that the respondents were in general representative of Dade County voters.

Table 1

Sample Demographics Compared to Dade County Registered Voters

Demographic Variable	Survey Sample (n=400) %	Registered Voters (n=593,108)* %	Difference %
Sex:			
Male	49.6	44.8	+ 4.8
Female	50.4	55.2	- 4.8
Age:			
18 - 24	13.0	4.5	+ 8.5
25 - 44	41.6	40.6	+ 1.0
45 - 64	27.8	30.5	- 2.7
Over 64	17.8	24.4	- 6.6
Ethnicity:			
White	54.8	56.1	- 1.3
Black	17.5	17.5	0.0
Hispanic	27.5	26.4	+ 1.1

* Source: Dade County Elections Department; August, 1987

As may be noted, there was a difference in sex and age distributions between the registered voters sampled and the population of registered voters residing in Dade County. However, the congruence between survey respondents and Dade County voters on all four demographic variables is consistent with what would be expected, given the statistical limitations inherent in the sample size.

Table 2

Voting Districts Represented in the Survey Sample
Compared to the Dade County Population

District	Percentage of Dade County Voters	Percentage in Survey Sample
# 100 - Carol City	4.7%	5.5%
101 - N. Miami Beach	5.7	2.0
102 - North Miami	5.5	7.0
103 - North Bay Village	4.9	4.5
104 - Miami Beach (N)	4.9	5.8
105 - Miami Beach (S)	3.8	2.5
106 - N.W. Dade	4.3	3.5
107 - N.W. Dade	4.9	4.8
108 - Opa Locka	4.8	5.0
109 - West Miami	4.6	4.2
110 - Medley	5.4	3.5
111 - Hialeah	3.4	5.2
112 - N.W. Dade	4.9	4.5
113 - Miami	3.7	4.8
114 - South Miami	5.2	5.5
115 - S.W. Dade	6.1	4.5
116 - S.W. Dade	6.1	7.0
117 - South Miami	6.6	6.5
118 - South Miami	4.9	6.8
119 - Homestead	5.0	5.7
120 - Homestead	0.6	1.2
Total	100.0%	100.0%

* Source: Dade County Elections Department; August, 1987

Results and Conclusions

Tax Increases to Support DCPS

The results of the telephone survey indicated that a 78.3 percent of the respondents felt there is a need for construction of new schools and 89.2 percent indicated there is a need to renovate and repair older schools. Consistent with these opinions, 80.5 percent of the respondents would support a bond issue to fund building of new schools and renovation of older schools. As shown in Table 3, the magnitude of this support fell to 66.6 percent when respondents were given an estimated cost of $60 more a year in property taxes extending over a 30 year period.

Table 3

Degree of Support for Passing a Bond Referendum

Solution	Very Likely		Likely		Combined Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Bond Referendum to Build New Schools and Renovate Older Schools	90	22.6	231	57.9	321	80.5
Bond Referendum to Build New Schools and Renovate Older Schools ($60/Year for 30 Years)	76	19.0	190	47.6	266	66.6

This level of support exceeds that generally found on Gallup surveys. Such surveys typically find that the United States public opposes raising taxes for local schools. In September, 1985 only 38 percent of those interviewed nationwide by Gallup supported raising taxes to help finance the public schools. However, it is important to consider that the Gallup Poll findings resulted from personal interviews conducted in the homes of respondents who may or may not have been registered voters. Methodological differences between the two studies may not yield direct comparisons since the DCPS study used a telephone survey to examine the opinions of a special group of self-identified registered voters.

Although 80.5 percent of the respondents were in favor of a bond issue, only one-quarter were "very likely" to support such an initiative (Table 3). The majority of respondents in favor of increased funding to the public schools were less enthusiastic about their support. Although the majority of the respondents surveyed were supportive of a bond issue, the level of support demonstrated on the survey should be considered in future planning.

An additional analysis regarding the level of support based on the type of election indicated that passage of a bond issue would be only slightly more likely during a special election rather than putting the question to the voters during the upcoming presidential primary. Table 4 compares the degree of support for a bond issue among survey respondents who claimed to be registered voters likely to vote in the upcoming presidential primary (March, 1988) with respondents likely to vote in a special election considering funding for the public schools.

The vast majority of the respondents interviewed claimed they would vote in both types of elections. In fact, only 37 of the 400 respondents interviewed claimed they would vote in the presidential primary but not in a special election concerning public school funding. Only six respondents claimed they would vote in a special election but not in the upcoming presidential primary.

Table 4

Bond Referendum Support
Based on Type of Election

Issue	Percent in Favor	
	Presidential Primary Voters (n=395) %	Special Election Voters (n=364) %
Bond Referendum to Build New Schools & Renovate Older Schools	81.1	82.3
Bond Referendum to Build New Schools & Renovate Older Schools ($60/Year for 30 Years)	67.2	68.8

* Support for the bond referendum was calculated by combining "very likely" and "likely" responses.

Although 364 or 91.5 percent of the respondents surveyed indicated they would vote in a special election concerning public school funding, their actual voting behavior may differ from their intentions. Voter turnout during special elections varies based upon the issues involved. In general, only 20-30 percent of the registered voters in Dade County participate in special elections. The rate found among the telephone survey respondents was considerably higher. Therefore, caution is advised when interpreting these findings since what people say they will do (on a survey) may differ from what they will actually do in a given situation.

What appears crucial to passage of any bond issue concerning funding to the public schools is the degree of information available to voters. Survey results indicated that respondents were overwhelmingly supportive of a bond issue until they were informed of how much money it would cost. Support fell off by 13 percent (from 80% to 67%) when the question specified an estimated amount of funding needed (i.e., $60/year for 30 years). Therefore, the actual funding level required by DCPS to build new schools and to renovate older schools should be given careful and extensive consideration before asking voters for support.

The telephone survey respondents were also asked for their opinions regarding three alternative solutions to the problems of school overcrowding and the need to renovate older schools in the event that increased funding is not available. These findings are depicted in Table 5 and indicate that respondents favored larger classes most frequently (81.3 percent) and double sessions least (48.3 percent). In the absence of increased funding for solving the problem of school overcrowding, 62.1 percent of the respondents supported the implementation of year-round schools.

Table 5

Support for Alternate Solutions
to School Overcrowding and Renovation Needs
Given Increased Funding is Not Available

Solution	Degree of Support: Very Likely n	%	Likely n	%	Combined Total n	%
Double Sessions	87	21.8	106	26.5	193	48.3
Larger Classes	172	43.0	153	38.3	325	81.3
Year-Round School	111	27.8	137	34.3	248	62.1

The reader is referred to Table 6 for findings concerning bond issue support across seven demographic variables. These findings show that support for passage of a bond issue to fund DCPS schools is more prevalent among registered voters with the following demographic characteristics: female, age under 35, Hispanic, high school graduates and those with some college, family income under $30,000, and parents of students attending DCPS elementary schools.

Table 6

A Comparison of Bond Referendum Support
by Selected Demographic Variables

Demographic Variable	n	Favoring Bond Referendum* %	Favoring Bond Referendum @ $60/Year for 30 Years %	Decline in Support ** %
Sex:				
Male	197	77.2	65.0	12.2
Female	201	83.6	68.2	15.4
Age:				
Under 35	127	85.0	69.8	15.2
35-54	156	76.3	62.8	13.5
Over 54	117	81.0	68.4	12.6
Ethnicity:				
White, Non-Hispanic	219	77.1	65.8	11.3
Black, Non-Hispanic	70	78.6	56.5	22.1
Hispanic	11	89.1	75.4	13.7
Level of Education:				
No High School Diploma	44	81.4	54.6	26.8
High School Grad/Some College	201	83.1	68.0	15.1
College Graduates	153	77.8	69.3	8.5
Family Income:				
Under $30,000	228	82.9	70.5	12.4
Over $30,000	130	78.5	65.4	13.1
Parental Status:				
Public School Parent	101	81.2	63.4	17.8
Non-Public School Parent	23	91.7	75.0	16.7
Non-Parent	275	79.2	67.2	12.0
Type of DCPS School Children Attend:				
Elementary	34	85.3	70.6	14.7
Middle/Junior	18	72.2	50.0	22.2
High School	56	83.9	66.1	17.8

* Support for the bond referendum was calculated by combining "very likely" and "likely" responses.

** "Decline in Support" refers to the drop-off seen when specifying an estimated cost of $60/year for 30 years.

Data in Table 6 also indicate that the decline in support for a bond issue, after an estimated cost of $60/year for 30 years is provided, is greatest for Black, Non-Hispanic respondents and those respondents with limited educational background (i.e., "no high school diploma").

Rating of the Public Schools

Of those respondents who had opinions about the public school system, 54.3 percent rated the DCPS instructional program as an A ("Excellent") or B ("Good"), while only 13.7 percent provided a rating of D ("Poor") or F ("Very Poor") (Table 7). Teachers received A and B grades from 62.4 percent of the respondents, while principals and other administrators received similar grades from 57.0 percent of the respondents who provided a rating.

Table 7

Rating of the School District

Area Graded	Average Rating*	Average Grade	Percent A and B Grades
Quality of Instructional Program	3.5	B	54.3
Teachers	3.7	B	62.4
Principals & Administrators	3.6	B	57.0
Degree Public is Informed About DCPS	3.2	C	38.5
Overall Grade for DCPS	3.4	C	47.2
Overall Grade for Public Schools Nationally	3.6	B	54.8

* Calculated with a low of 1 and a high of 5.

Note: The above ratings were calculated by excluding "don't know" responses.

Of those respondents who had an opinion, only 38.5 percent provided A or B grades regarding the extent to which the public is informed about the Dade County Public Schools. This is consistent with the degree of familiarity concerning the local public schools as expressed by survey respondents. Although respondents had resided in Dade County for an average of 23 years and 25 percent were parents of DCPS students, only 15 percent considered themselves "very familiar" with the school system. However, an additional 54 percent of the survey respondents considered themselves "somewhat familiar" with DCPS.

Results in Table 8 provide a comparison between DCPS ratings and those from the 19th Annual Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitude Toward the Public Schools. This comparison indicates that DCPS ratings are higher than those found nationally for each of the four areas. A greater proportion of telephone survey respondents provided A and B grades for DCPS teachers, principals, and administrators than did respondents surveyed by the Gallup Organization. Again, caution is advised when making comparisons between these two studies given the methodological differences involved.

In contrast to what is generally found in national Gallup Polls, telephone survey respondents gave schools in their own community lower marks than they did to public schools nationally. Among those respondents who had an opinion, the Dade County Public Schools received overall grades of A or B from 47.2 percent, while such grades were given to public schools nationally by 54.8 percent of the respondents.

One explanation for this finding can be found in the comparative data contained in Table 8. It appears that those respondents surveyed in Dade County had a much more favorable opinion of schools throughout the nation than respondents from other parts of the country. A total of 47 percent of the Dade County respondents surveyed provided A and B grades to the public schools nationally compared to only 26 percent of Gallup's respondents surveyed throughout the country (percentages include "don't know" responses). Therefore, what appears to be a lack of confidence in DCPS schools may be actually attributed to an unusually positive view of schools throughout the nation.

Table 8

Rating the School District
A Comparison of DCPS Findings With the 1987 Gallup Poll

Area Rated	DCPS* %	Gallup Poll** %
Teachers:		
A + B	56	49
A	16	15
B	40	34
C	24	25
D	5	6
FAIL	3	3
Don't Know	12	17
Principals & Administrators:		
A + B	51	43
A	16	14
B	35	29
C	25	27
D	8	9
FAIL	4	3
Don't Know	12	18
Local Public Schools Overall:		
A + B	44	43
A	10	12
B	34	31
C	39	30
D	8	9
FAIL	2	4
Don't Know	7	14
Public Schools Nationally:		
A & B	47	26
A	12	4
B	35	22
C	30	44
D	7	11
FAIL	2	2
Don't Know	14	17

* DCPS ratings were calculated including "don't know" responses in order to be directly comparable to Gallup Poll findings. These figures should not be confused with those contained in Table 7 which were calculated by excluding such responses.

** Source: Gallup, A.M. and Clark, D.L. The 19th Annual Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitude Toward the Public Schools, Phi Delta Kappan, September, 1987, Vol 69, No. 1, p. 17-30.

The degree of familiarity with the local public schools indicated by the telephone survey is consistent with Gallup Poll findings. Table 9, provides comparative data showing that 14 percent of a national sample conducted by the Gallup Organization, judged themselves to be "well-informed" or "very familiar" with the local public schools. In fact, respondents surveyed in Dade County appeared more familiar with their local public schools than did respondents sampled throughout the country. A total of 69 percent indicated they were either "very familiar" or "somewhat similar" with DCPS compared to 50 percent who responded similarly in the national Gallup Poll.

Table 9

Degree of Familiarity With the Local Public Schools

Survey	Very Familiar %	Somewhat Familiar %	Not at All Familiar %	No Opinion %
DCPS Telephone Survey	15	54	30	1
Gallup Poll	14	36	44	6

An additional analysis regarding whether the educational services provided by DCPS had improved over the past few years indicated that one-third of the respondents perceived DCPS as "getting better" in the past few years (Table 10). Findings contained in Table 10 also show that approximately one-third of the registered voters perceived DCPS as "staying about the same" and one-quarter perceived the district as "getting worse." A larger proportion of the respondents surveyed in Dade County viewed the local public schools as improving (34 percent) compared to those surveyed nationally by the Gallup Organization (25 percent).

Table 10

Perceived Improvement in Local Public Schools

Survey	Perceived Improvement			
	Getting Better %	Staying the Same %	Getting Worse %	No Opinion %
DCPS Telephone Survey	34	32	24	11
Gallup Poll	25	36	22	17

Major Problems Confronting DCPS

In the opinion of the registered voters interviewed (Table 11), the top four problems with which DCPS must contend, include school dropouts, overcrowded schools, lack of needed teachers, and lack of discipline. Potential problem areas cited least frequently as major DCPS problems included poor physical condition of schools, insufficient after-school programs, and lack of public prekindergarten programs. These findings are consistent with national Gallup Polls which indicate the lack of discipline, dropouts, and difficulty getting good teachers are generally cited most frequently.

Table 11

Problems Confronting DCPS

Problem Area*	Major Problem %	Minor Problem %	No Problem %	No Opinion %
School Dropouts	83.7	11.0	2.0	3.3
Overcrowded Schools	75.5	17.8	3.0	3.5
Lack of Needed Teachers	73.0	16.5	6.3	4.3
Lack of Discipline	70.0	21.5	5.0	3.5
Poor Academic Standards	56.4	31.7	7.3	4.3
Lack of Proper Financial Support	53.0	30.8	12.0	4.3
Lack of Proper Instructional Materials	46.8	37.8	10.0	5.5
Lack of Proper Facilities	43.1	40.6	12.6	3.8
Lack of Public Prekinder-garten Programs	32.3	37.5	22.5	7.8
Insufficient After-School Programs	31.5	42.8	19.8	5.8
Poor Physical Condition of Schools	27.3	54.8	12.3	5.8

*Order based on percentage of respondents indicating area represents a "major problem".

The fact that school overcrowding was seen as a major problem by three-quarters of the respondents is consistent with the majority view that there is a need to build new shcools in Dade County. This finding is also consistent with the degree of support found among respondents concerning their willingness to fund such improvements.

Sources of Information About DCPS

The respondents participating in the telephone survey reported learning the most about the public schools from newspapers and television (Table 12). Substantial numbers of respondents also mentioned learning about the public schools from their own children or other DCPS students, and from teachers and other school employees. This information may prove valuable in developing strategies to improve communications with Dade County citizens.

Table 12

Respondent's Source of Information About DCPS

Source[1]	Percent Mentioning First	Percent Mentioning First, Second or Third
Newspapers	16.6	48.5
Television	11.1	37.2
Own Children/Students	20.1	32.2
Teachers & School Employees	7.3	23.2
Other Adults	9.8	19.8
Radio	4.0	12.2
School Meetings	1.3	11.2
Parents of Students	0.8	9.5
School District Publications	0.3	9.0
Parent-Teacher Organization	2.0	8.8
School Building Publications	1.5	7.0
Other Sources Not Listed	5.5	3.2
Direct Experience With Schools	11.1	---
News/Media	7.0	---
Personal Experience	0.5	---
At Work/on the Job	0.5	---
Total	99.4[2]	---[3]

[1] Order based on percentage of respondents mentioning first, second or third.

[2] Figures do not sum to 100% due to missing data.

[3] Figures do not sum to 100% due to multiple responses.

APPENDIX

DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
OFFICE OF EDUCATIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY

TELEPHONE SURVEY: DADE COUNTY RESIDENTS

Telephone number: _____ Date: _____

Interviewer: _____
(1-5)

Hello, my name is _____. I'm calling from Strategy Research, Inc., an independent research firm. We are conducting a survey on behalf of Dade County Public Schools to find out ways the school system can better serve the community. For this survey, I need to speak to the head-of-household or spouse. Would that be you? (*IF NOT, ARRANGE CALL-BACK.*)

This survey is being conducted to get the opinions of the citizens of Dade County regarding our public schools. Just a few moments of your time will be needed. Your answers will be kept strictly confidential.

1. Are you a registered voter in Dade County?

   100% Yes (1) _____ No (2) (*Terminate interview if NO*)

2. Are you likely to vote in the next presidential primary in March?

   98.8% Yes (1) _____ No (2)

3. Would you be likely to vote if a special election was held concerning funding for the public schools?

   91.5% Yes (1) _____ No (2) (*INT: If Questions 2 and 3 are NO, thank and terminate*)

Now, I'd like you to take a few minutes to grade the Dade County Public Schools.

Students receive grades A, B, C, D, and F on their report cards. Suppose the public schools themselves, in this community, were graded in the same way. Please use the grade "A" to represent EXCELLENT, "B" GOOD, "C" FAIR, "D" POOR, and "F" VERY POOR. There are no right or wrong answers to these questions. Your opinion is what counts.

(*INT: If DON'T KNOW, then write in "DK"*)

A+B

54.3% 4. What grade would you give the Dade County Public Schools regarding the quality of the instructional program offered in the district?

62.4% 5. What grade would you give the teachers in the Dade County Public Schools?

57.0% 6. What grade would you give the principals and administrators in the Dade County Public Schools?

38.5% 7. What grade would you give concerning the degree to which the public is informed about the Dade County Public Schools?

47.2% 8. What grade would you give the Dade County Public Schools overall?

54.8% 9. Now, what grade would you give the public schools NATIONALLY overall?

I am now going to read you a list of issues or problem areas frequently confronted by school districts. For each one, please tell me whether you consider it a MAJOR PROBLEM, A MINOR PROBLEM OR NO PROBLEM AT ALL for the public schools in Dade County.

(*INT: Mark with an "X".*)

		MAJOR (4)	MINOR (3)	NO PROBLEM (2)	NO OPINION (1)
10.	Overcrowded schools	____	93.3% ____	____	____
11.	Lack of needed teachers	____	89.5% ____	____	____
12.	Lack of proper instructional materials	____	84.6% ____	____	____
13.	Lack of public prekindergarten programs	____	69.8% ____	____	____
14.	Lack of discipline	____	91.5% ____	____	____
15.	Poor academic standards	____	88.1% ____	____	____
16.	Insufficient after-school programs	____	74.3% ____	____	____
17.	School dropouts	____	94.7% ____	____	____
18.	Lack of proper financial support	____	83.8% ____	____	____
19.	Lack of proper facilities	____	83.7% ____	____	____
20.	Poor physical condition of schools	____	82.1% ____	____	____

21. Other (Specify): _____

_____

_____

_____

22. During the past few years, would you say that the public schools in Dade County have been: (*INT: Read list*)

34.1% Getting better (4) | 31.6% Staying the same (3) | 23.6% Getting Worse (2) | 10.8% Don't Know (*Do not read*) (1)

23. Do you believe there is a need for construction of new schools in Dade County?

78.3% Yes (1) | 11.3% No (2) | 10.5% Don't Know (3)

24. According to what you know about the public schools in Dade County, do you believe there is a need to renovate and repair older schools?

89.2% Yes (1) | 10.8% No (2)

25. The public schools in Dade County are gaining students at the rate of about 9,000 new students every year. In order to accommodate these new students, additional schools will have to be built. One way to pay for the building of new schools would be through a bond issue, that is, in effect borrowing money to be repaid over a number of years. How likely are you to support or vote for a bond issue to build new schools or fix up older schools? Would you be ... (*INT: Read list*)

22.6% Very Likely (1) | 57.9% Likely (2) | 11.0% Unlikely (3) | 8.0% Very Unlikely (4)

26. The School Board is considering issuing bonds to fund the construction of 35 new schools and the renovation of nearly all existing schools over the next five years. If the bond issue is approved by the School Board and voters, the average property owner in Dade County would pay approximately $60 a year more in property taxes over the next 30 years until the bonds are repaid. How likely would you be to support a bond issue under these circumstances? Would you be ... (*INT: Read list*)

19.0% Very Likely (1) | 47.6% Likely (2) | 22.3% Unlikely (3) | 10.8% Very Unlikely (4)

I will read to you a list of alternatives other than a bond issue that could possibly be employed to meet the needs of the increased number of students. How likely would you be to support each of these alternatives?

27. Double sessions, that is, some children attending school in the morning and other children attending during the afternoon. Would you be ... (*INT: Read list*)

21.8% Very Likely (4) | 26.5% Likely (3) | 39.3% Unlikely (2) | 12.3% Very Unlikely (1)

28. Larger classes, that is, up to the maximum that the room will hold. Would you be ... (*INT: Read list*)

43.0% Very Likely (4) | 38.3% Likely (3) | 15.3% Unlikely (2) | 3.5% Very Unlikely (1)

29. Year-round school, that is, some children would be required to attend school in the summer and take recess during another time of the year. Would you be ... (*INT: Read list*)

27.8% Very Likely (4) 34.3% Likely (3) 27.1% Unlikely (2) 10.8% Very Unlikely (1)

Finally, I have a few questions for our statistical comparisons. Once again, your answers will be held in strict confidence.

30. How familiar are you with the Dade County school system? Are you ... (*INT: Read list*)

15.0% Very Familiar (3) 54.3% Somewhat Familiar (2) 30.3% Not at all Familiar (1)

31. Where do you get most of your information about the public schools? (*INT: Do not read list below, record first response.*)

(RESPONDENT'S FIRST RESPONSE) _____

Other: (*INT: Check those mentioned by respondent: Probe for other sources.*)

---- FIRST RESPONSES ----

16.6% (1) Newspapers

11.1% (2) Television

4.0% (3) Radio

20.1% (4) My own children/students

0.8% (5) Parents of students

7.3% (6) Teachers and school employees

0.3% (7) School district newsletter/publications

1.5% (8) School building newsletter/publications

1.3% (9) School meetings

2.0% (10) Parent-teacher organizations

9.8% (11) Other adults/friends/neighbors

25.2% (12) Other (Specify):_____

32. Do you have any children under the age of 5?

13.1% Yes (1) 86.9% No (2) (If no, go to item #34.)

33. Do you plan on sending this child (any of these children) to Dade County public schools?

55.4% Yes (1) 30.4% No (2) 14.3% Undecided (3)

34. Do you have any children age 5 through 18 living at home?

31.7% (1) Yes 68.3% (2) No (If no, go to Item #38.)

35. Which of the following types of schools do your children age 5 through 18 attend?

80.8% (1) Public School 14.4% (2) Private School 4.0% (3) Both Public and Private

0.8% (4) Other (Specify): _____

(*INT: If #1 or #3 go to Item #36. If #2 go to Item #37.*)

36. For your child (children) attending public school, what grade(s) are they enrolled in? (Circle as many as needed.)

n =	1	5	12	7	9	16	19	12	7	12	11	18	11	25
	Pre K	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)

37. For your child (children) currently attending private school, do you plan on sending any of them to Dade County public schools in the future?

33.3% (1) Yes 66.7% (2) No

38. To which of the following age groups do you belong? (*INT: Read list*)

13.0% (1) 18 to 24

18.8% (2) 25 to 34

22.8% (3) 35 to 44

16.3% (4) 45 to 54

11.5% (5) 55 to 64

17.8% (6) 65 or over

39. What is your ethnic or racial background? (*INT: Read list*)

54.8% (1) White, non-Hispanic

17.5% (2) Black, non-Hispanic

27.5% (3) Hispanic

0.3% (4) Asian or Pacific Islander

--- (5) American Indian or Alaskan Native

40. What is the highest level of education you had the opportunity to complete? (*INT: Read list*)

5.3% (1) Completed 8th grade or less

5.8% (2) Some high school, but did not finish

29.6% (3) Completed high school

4.5% (4) Completed technical trade or business school

16.3% (5) Some college, but did not finish

13.6% (6) Graduated from Community/Junior College

14.3% (7) Graduated from a four-year college or university

10.6% (8) Completed a post-graduate or professional degree

41. What is the approximate combined total income of your household for 1986 before taxes? (*INT: Read list*)

16.2% (1) $10,000 or below

10.6% (2) $10,001 - $15,000

15.6% (3) $15,001 - $20,000

21.2% (4) $20,001 - $30,000

14.0% (5) $30,001 - $40,000

11.7% (6) $40,001 - $60,000

10.6% (7) $60,001 or above

42. How many years have you been a resident of Dade County? (*INT: Insert number of years.*) 23.3 years (average)

43. What is your home Zip Code number? ---

44. Sex of respondent (*INT: Do not read*): 49.6% (1) Male 50.4% (2) Female

(*INT: Read - "This concludes our survey. Thank you for your time and cooperation."*)

Language in which interview was conducted:

English 84.0%
Spanish 16.0%

References

Gallup, G. H. The 17th Annual Survey of the Public's Attitude Toward the Public Schools. Phi Delta Kappan, September 1985: 38-51.

Gallup, A. M. and Clark, D. L. The 19th Annual Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitude Toward the Public Schools, Phi Delta Kappan, September 1987, 17-30.

Moseley, P.C. and Wilde, J. Three Surveys of Staff and Parent Opinions About the Los Angeles Unified School District Instructional Program: Spring 1985, Research and Evaluation Branch, Los Angeles Unified School District, 1985.

The School Board of Dade County, Florida adheres to a policy of nondiscrimination in educational programs/activities and employment and strives affirmatively to provide equal opportunity for all as required by:

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964– prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, or national origin.

Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended - prohibits discrimination in employment on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin.

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 - prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex.

Age Discrimination Act of 1967, as amended - prohibits discrimination on the basis of age between 40 and 70.

Section 504 of the Rehbilitation Act of 1973 - prohibits discrimination against the handicapped.

Florida Educational Equity Act - prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, sex, national origin, marital status or handicap against a student or employee.

Veterans are provided re-employment rights in accordance with P.L. 93– 508 (Federal) and Section 295.07, Florida Statutes, which also stipulates categorical preferences for employment.